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CONTACT: Debbie Rich  
401. 453-5071 or 741-3130

## **CHAFEE TOURS ROUTE 195 RELOCATION PROJECT**

*Pledges Additional Federal Support for Future RI Transportation Initiatives*

**PROVIDENCE, RI** – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee today viewed the progress of the ongoing Route 195 Relocation Project – from the India Street Pedestrian Bridge above the highway in Providence. He was joined by Dr. William Ankner, director of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, as well as members of Rhode Island's business community. Chafee, a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which oversees transportation funding, was successful in securing \$10 million for the project in the FY 2001 Transportation Appropriations bill.

The Route 195 relocation project calls for moving Route 195 south of the Fox Point Hurricane Barrier. This will open more than 30 acres for redevelopment and link the Jewelry District with Downtown Providence.

"I was pleased to secure this funding for the I-195 relocation project," said Chafee. "Rebuilding Route 195 will surely benefit the state by increasing traffic safety, reducing congestion, creating open space and bringing about economic development in the City of Providence."

Senator Chafee is a cosponsor of the Highway Funding Restoration Act. The measure, introduced by Senator Jim Jeffords, (I-VT) and other members of the EPW committee, would provide for highway infrastructure investment at the funding level guaranteed in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21). The President's FY 2003 budget submission for highways cuts federal funds by approximately 30 percent from the FY 2002 spending plan. If nothing is done to restore funding to at least TEA 21 guaranteed levels, there will be a drop of \$8.6 billion in highway spending from FY02 to FY03. The bill Chafee supports will restore the FY03 highway funding to the amount guaranteed in TEA 21.

"As this project moves forward, it is my hope to continue to work with RIDOT and my senate colleagues to ensure that federal funding plays a key role in the project's completion," Chafee pledged.

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“I would like to thank Senator Chafee for his ongoing efforts to help the state secure funding for this vital project,” said Governor Lincoln Almond. “The relocation of Route 195 will not only improve traffic flow and highway safety, but will serve as a catalyst to revitalize a significant portion of urban waterfront property.”

The relocation of Route 195 is expected to take ten years to complete. Besides moving the highway and the Providence River Bridge, the project calls for constructing new pedestrian bridges above Route 195 and new river walls/walks, building a new Point Street Overpass above Route 95, and making improvements to city streets and highway on and off ramps.

The Providence Foundation expects regional benefits from the rebuilding of Route 195. Waterfront redevelopment could result in more than 4,000 new jobs and may generate \$5 million in State taxes and \$5 million in City tax revenues. In addition, the foundation predicts that the new highway alignment will result in a significant reduction in congestion, reduce accidents by 42 percent and save \$36 million in accident costs over 25 years.

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